

2008 Kentucky AmeriCorps Launch

The AmeriCorps Launch seems to get better each year. The program year kickoff and training event for Kentucky AmeriCorps members was held on Oct. 2-3 in Frankfort. This year's event featured sessions on grant writing, stress management, volunteer recruitment and retention, disabilities inclusion, working with the media, financial planning, green living, volunteer management technology, public presentations and teamwork. One of the most memorable sessions was the closing plenary featuring Dale Smith Thomas, an internationally known motivational speaker. Members left the launch energized and ready to serve.



The induction ceremony was held on the evening of Oct. 2 on the steps of the Kentucky State Capitol. 270 first- and second-year AmeriCorps members took a pledge to get things done in Kentucky as they embark on a year of service to their fellow Kentuckians across the state.

The evening ceremony highlighted both the individual members and the collective group. Holding faintly glowing light sticks, members marched up the steps single file and gathered at the landing. The lighted march was wonderfully symbolic. Collectively, Kentucky AmeriCorps shines a light on community needs across the state and the incredible difference the members make meeting those needs. Yet, individually, each Kentucky AmeriCorps member is a light unto himself and herself, serving at the grassroots level, casting a light of hope and help on others, up close and personal.

For more than a decade, Kentucky AmeriCorps members have been lighting the way for countless children, adults, seniors and families in need. Members are assigned to one of 12 AmeriCorps state programs, serving 107 counties, where they will help address unmet local human service needs. About 25 percent of the members in this year's class are second-year members. In addition to performing community service tasks, members also recruit local volunteers to help ensure programs and progress continue after members complete their terms of service.

Doug Adams, chair of the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, administered the AmeriCorps pledge of service to members and program directors.

"AmeriCorps members make remarkable contributions to Kentucky, and I am proud of the enthusiasm of these members," Adams said. "The Kentucky AmeriCorps programs have grown each year, as more Kentuckians choose to serve the commonwealth and their country. In these difficult economic times, Kentucky AmeriCorps members are making a difference."

Eileen Cackowski, executive director of the KCCVS, said she was honored and proud to thank the members for the year



of service they have dedicated to getting things done.

"The members are the latest in this legacy of service," Cackowski said. "On behalf of all Kentuckians, I thank them for shining a light of hope and help – one person, one family, one school, one neighborhood, one community at a time – all across the commonwealth."

The KCCVS would like to thank our training officer, Melissa Newton, for her hard work organizing a great event. We wonder how she will top herself next year!